

# Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System

Melinda R. Ward

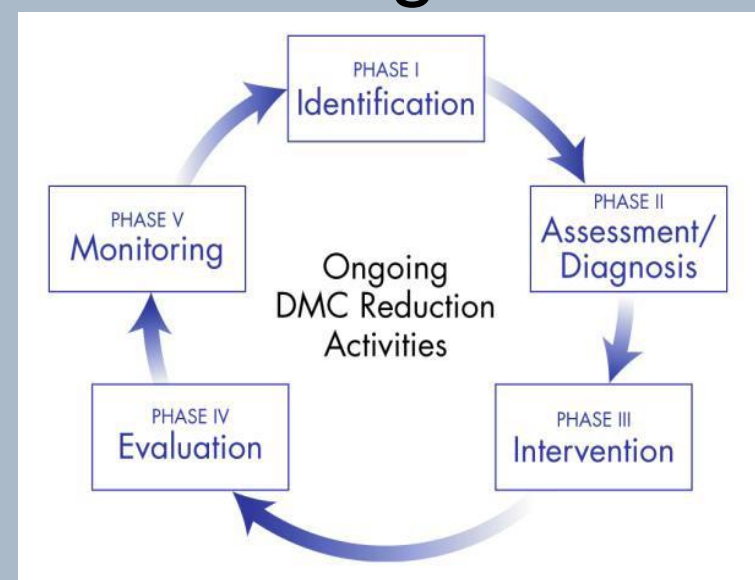
Tarrant County Juvenile Probation Department

## Introduction

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) is a prevalent problem throughout the juvenile justice system. This analysis provides a thorough overview of DMC in Tarrant County at multiple juvenile justice system contact points. Each contact point was analyzed over a five-year period (2011-2015). The findings from this study provide a foundation for assessment and, ultimately, the development of interventions to alleviate DMC in Tarrant County.

## Background

“Disproportionate Minority Contact is the rate of contact with the juvenile justice system among juveniles of a specific minority group that is significantly different than the rate of contact for whites (i.e., non-Hispanic Caucasians) or for other minority groups” (OJJDP, 2009). OJJDP has developed a five-phase model for methodically addressing DMC. The first stage is to identify where and to what degree DMC exists in the system. This analysis serves as the identification phase of DMC in the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System.



## Methodology

### Sample

Referrals to Tarrant County Juvenile Services (TCJS) between 2011 and 2015.

### Contact Points

- Referral
- Arrest
- Diversion
- DPP
- Detention
- Petition/Charges Filed
- Delinquent/Violated Findings
- Probation/Modification
- Placement
- TJJD
- JJAEP

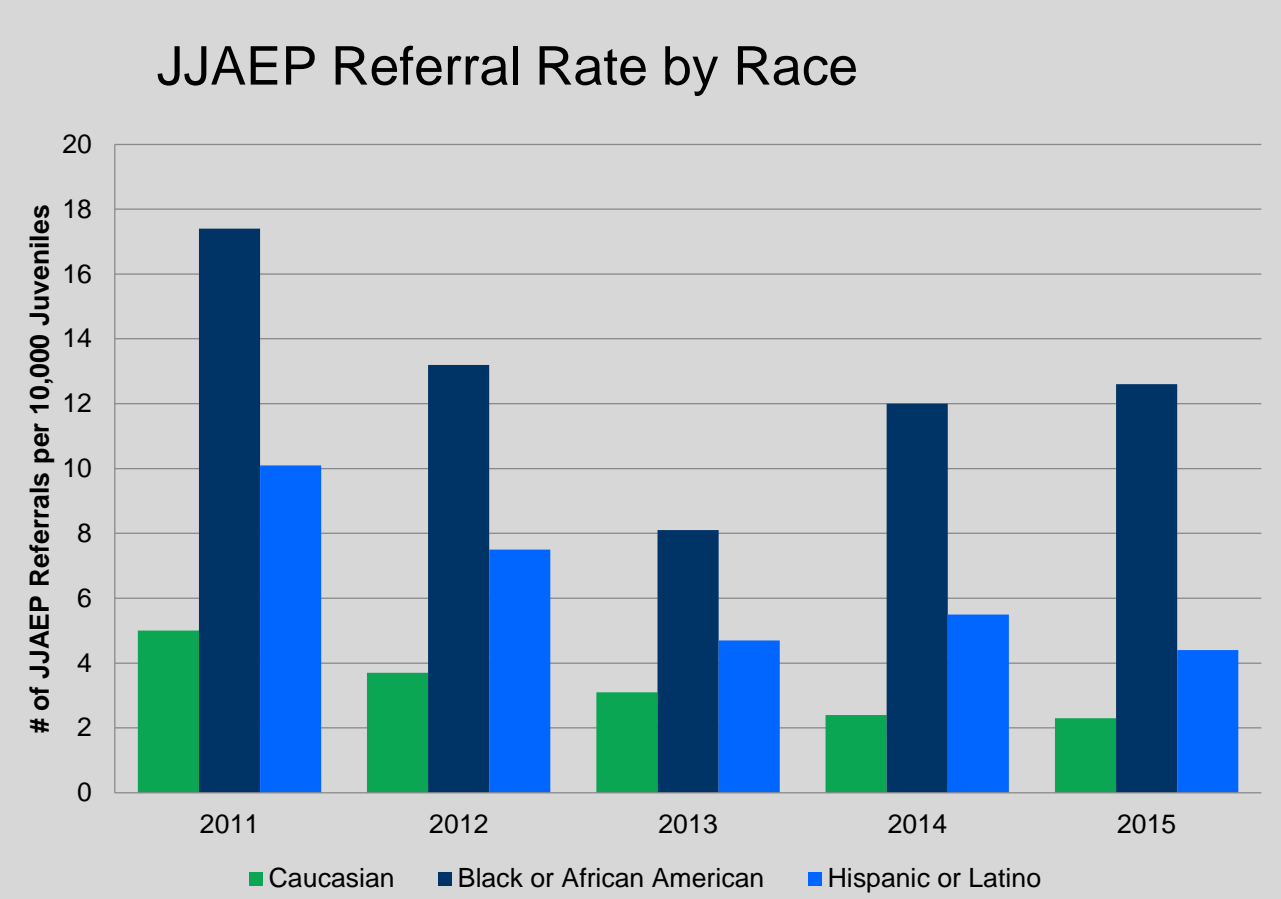
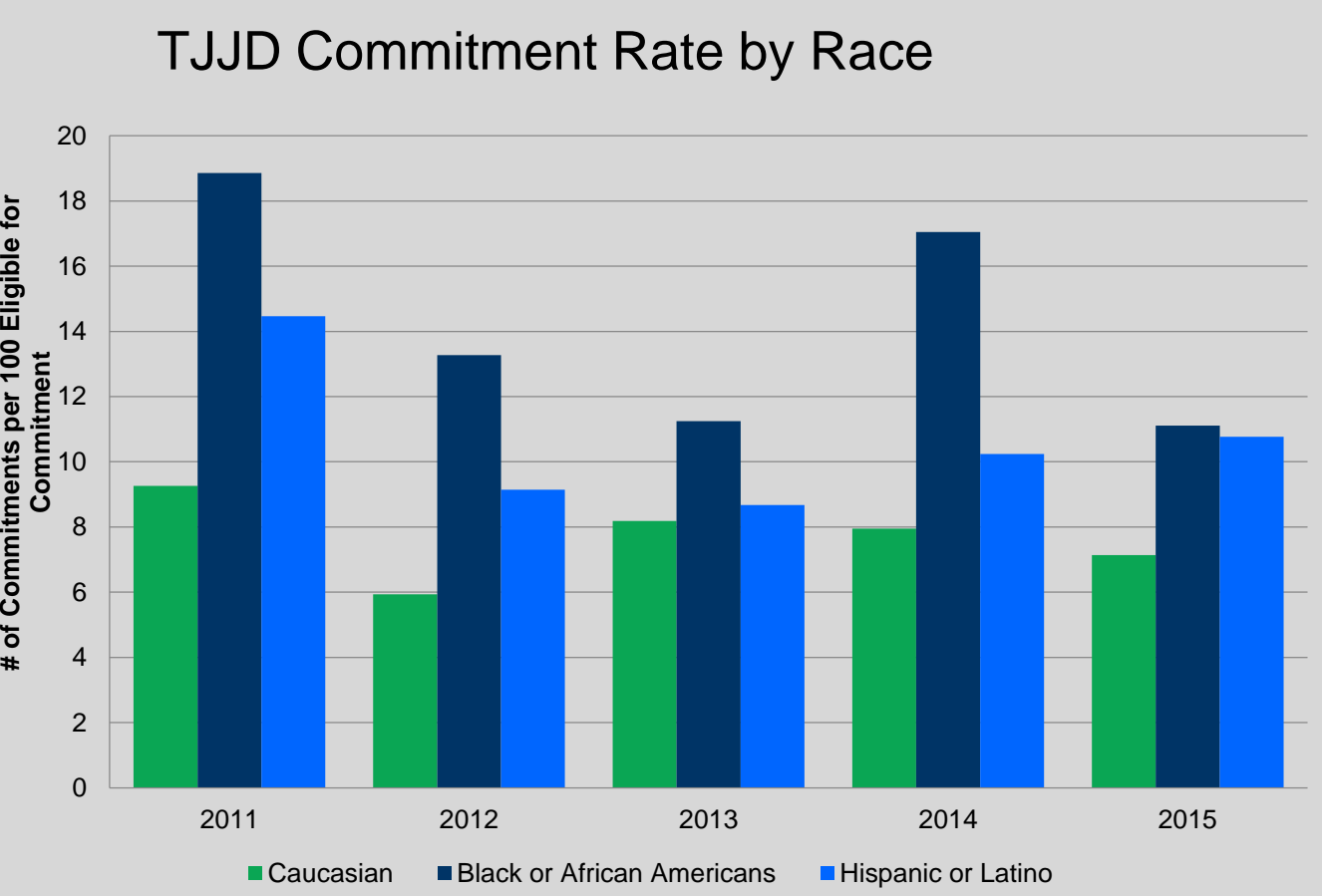
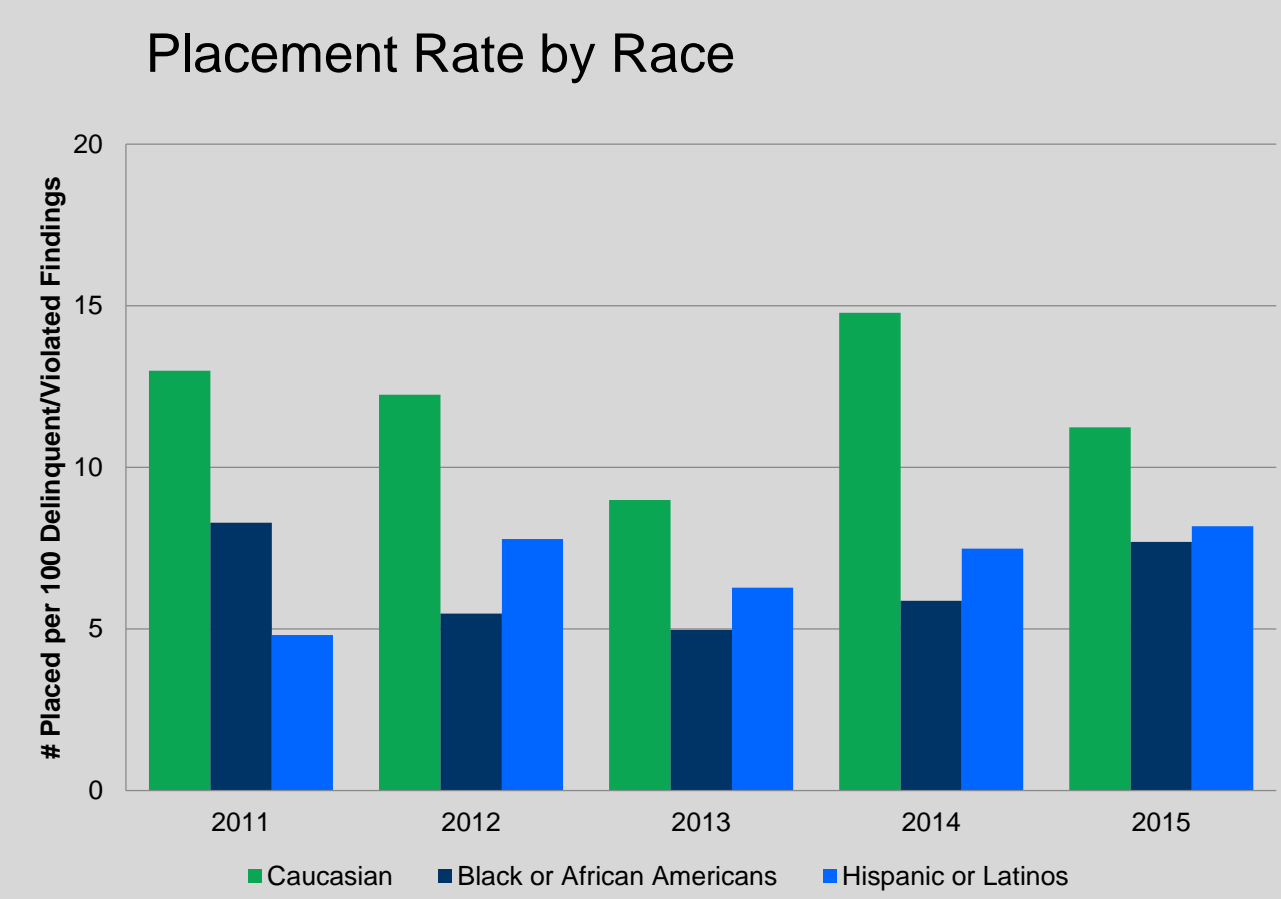
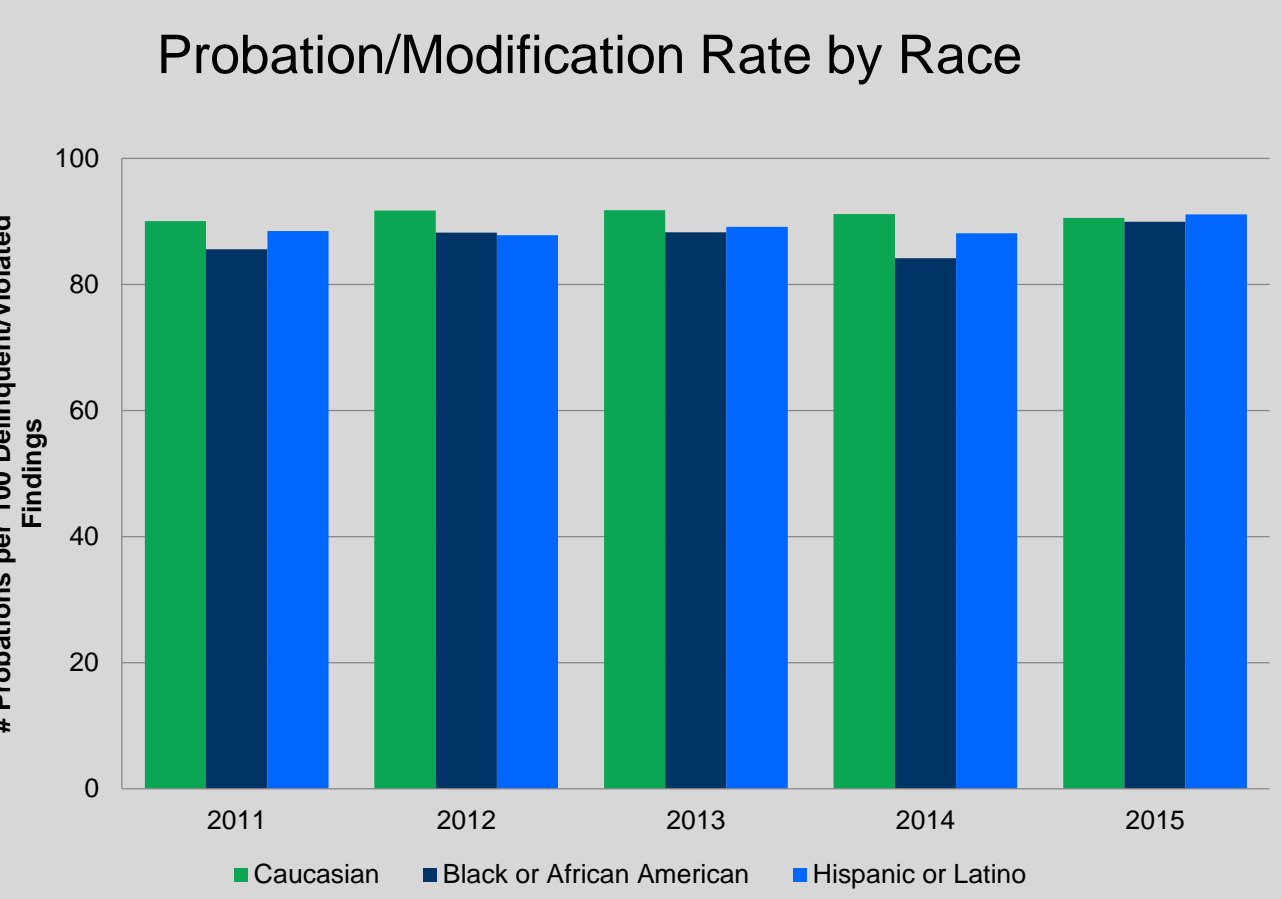
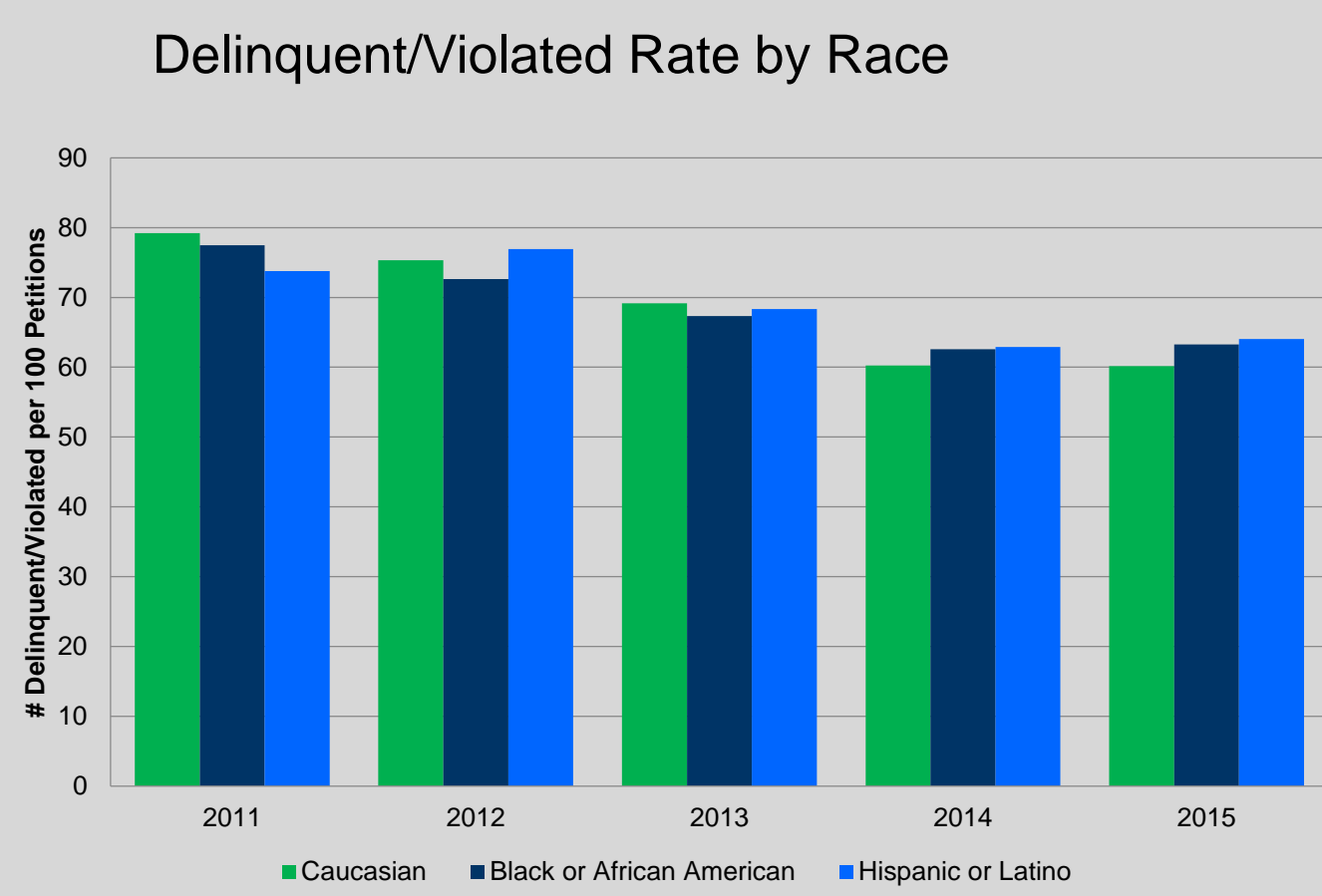
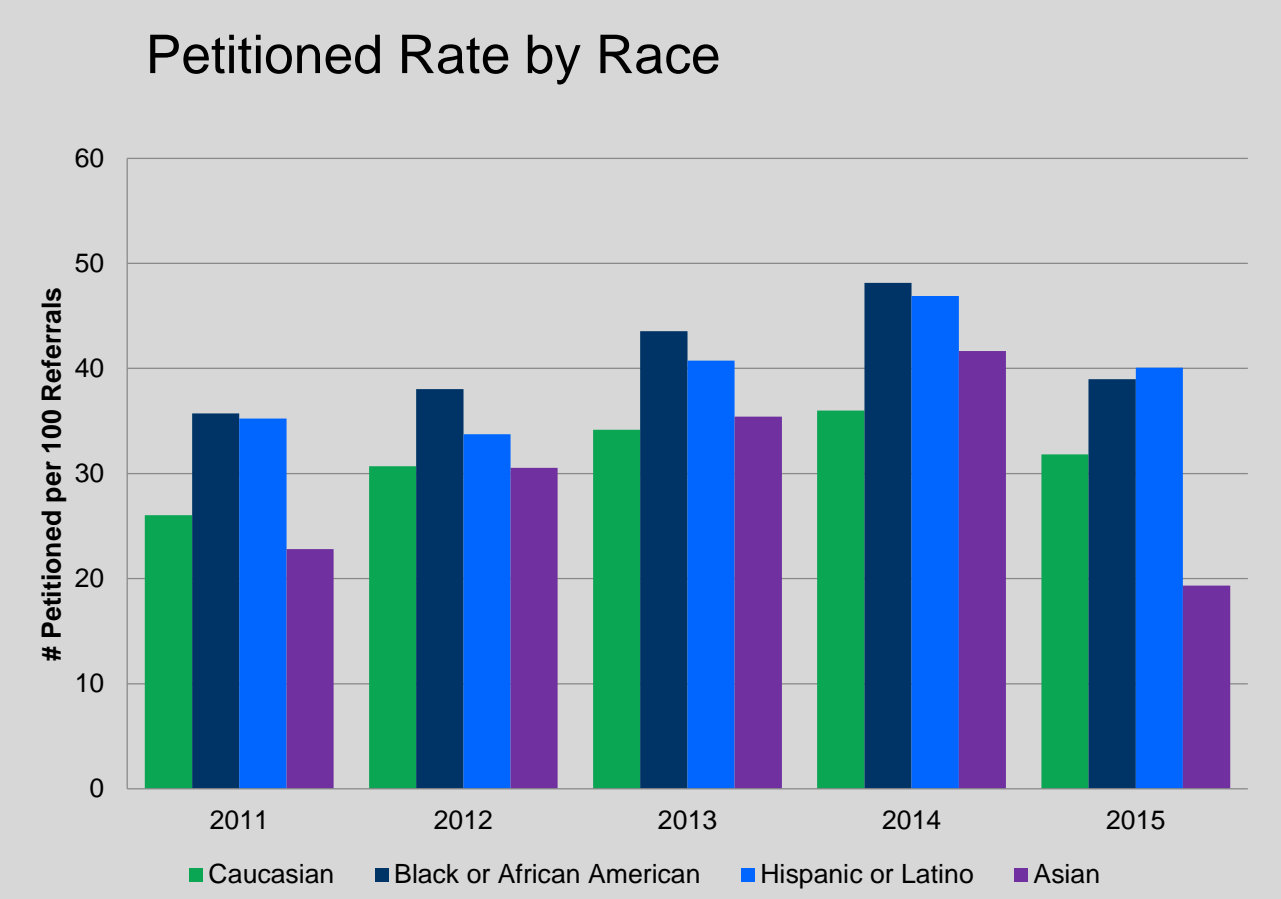
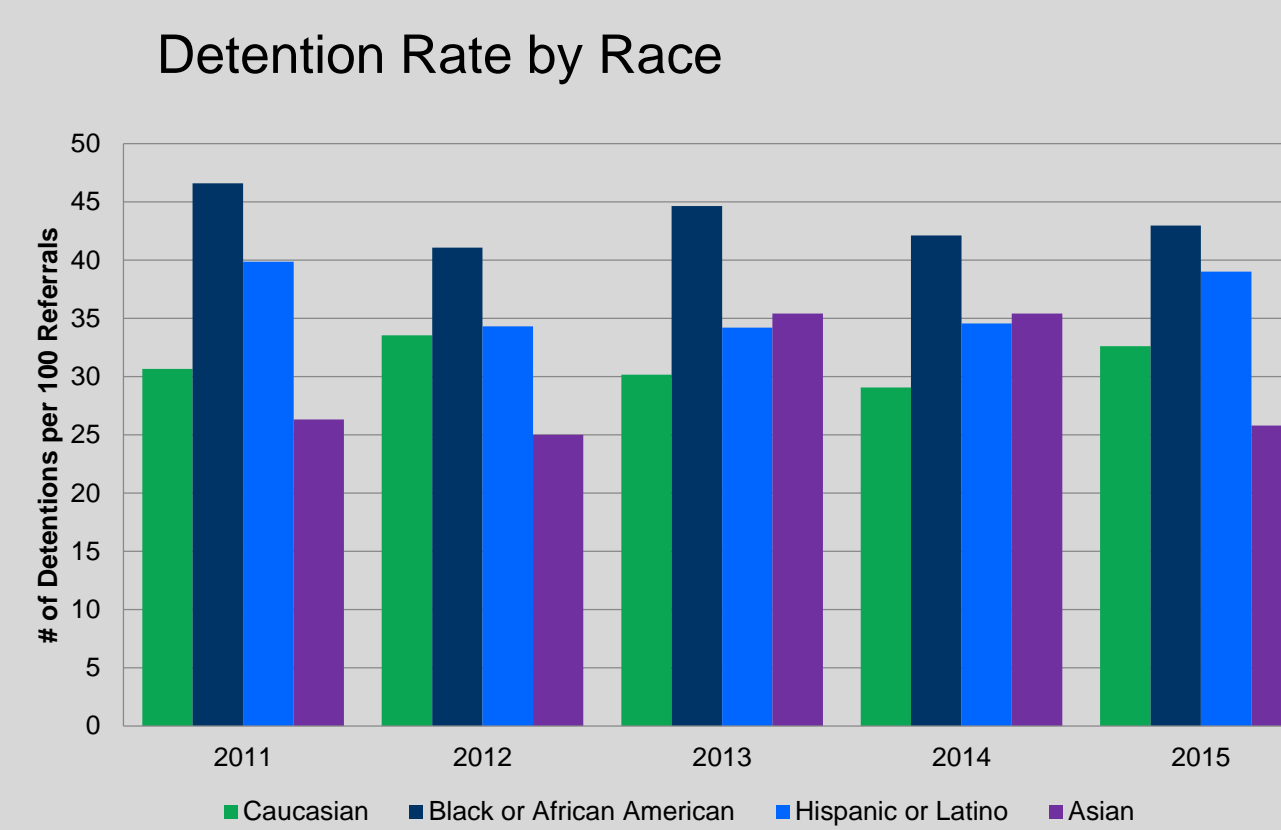
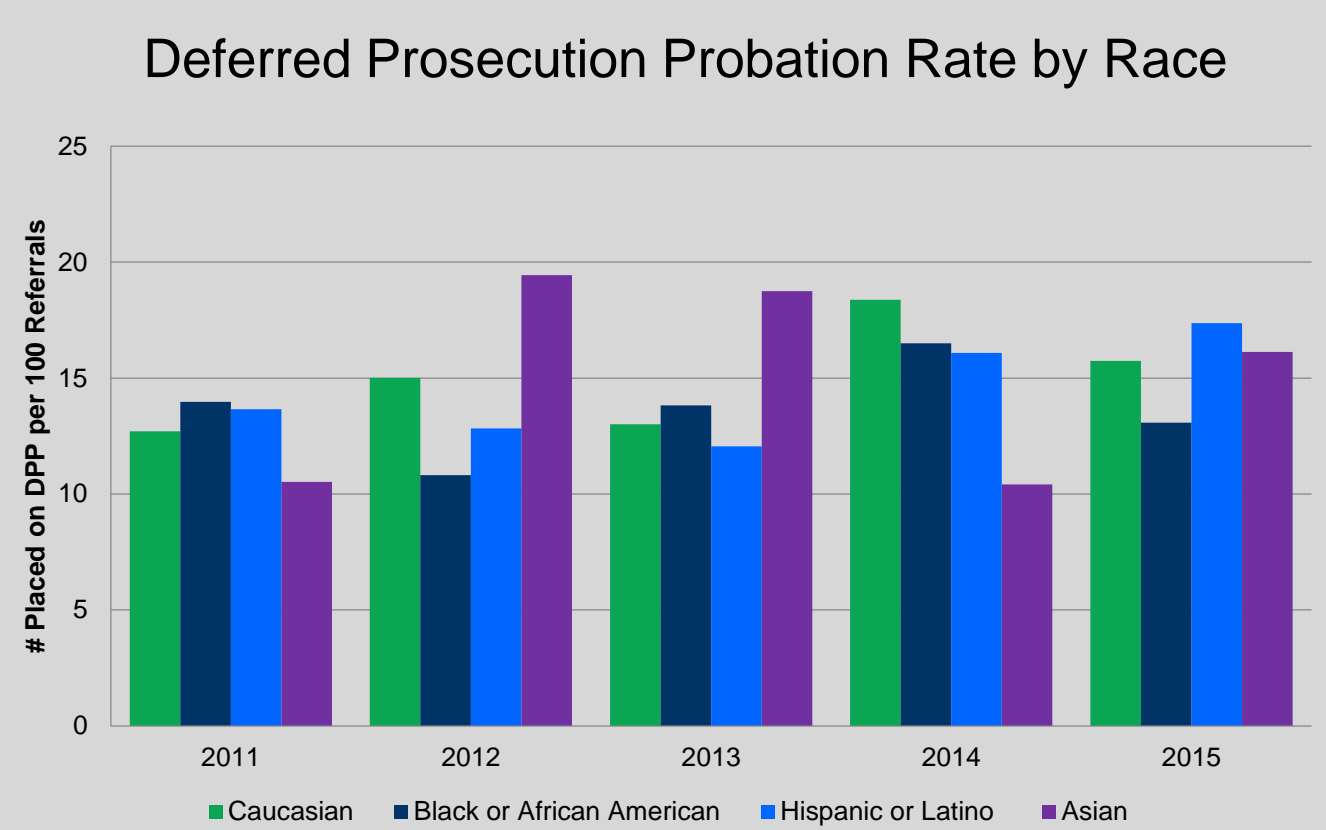
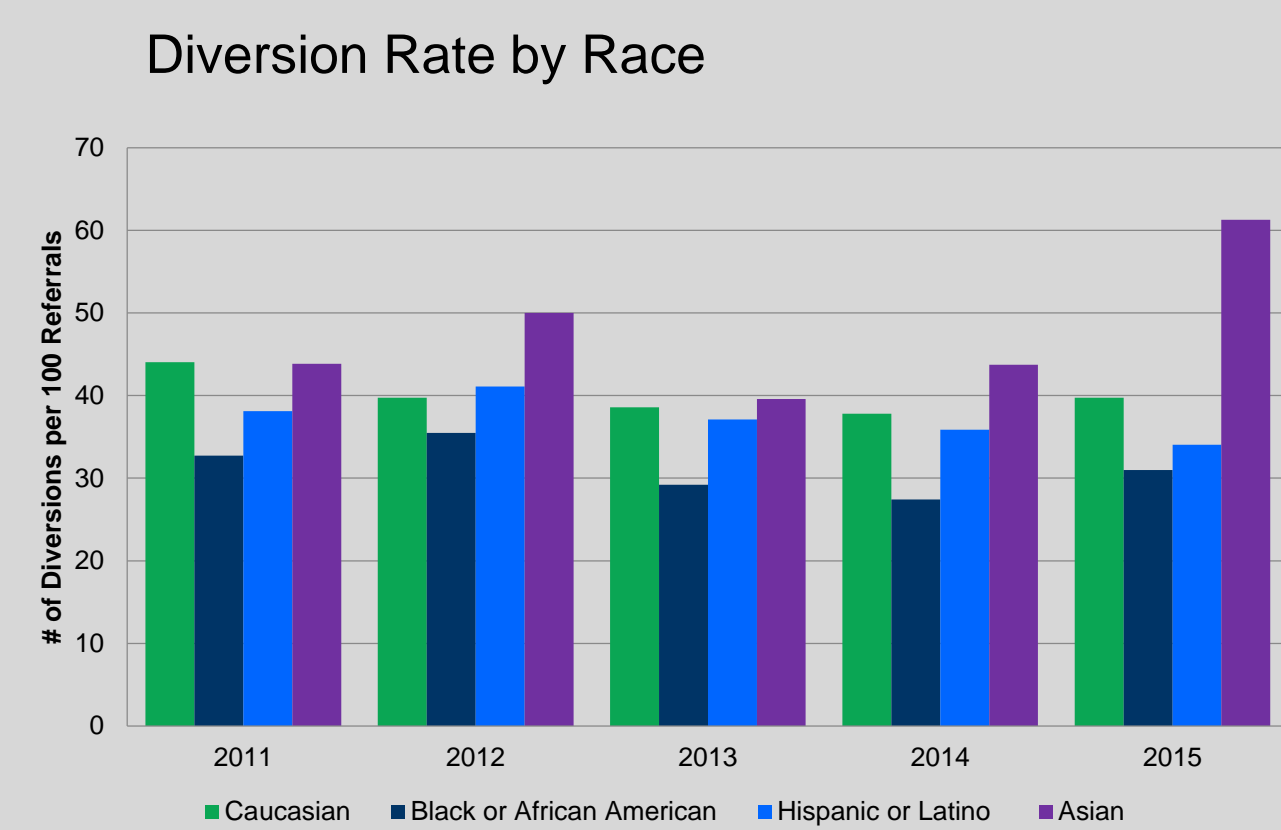
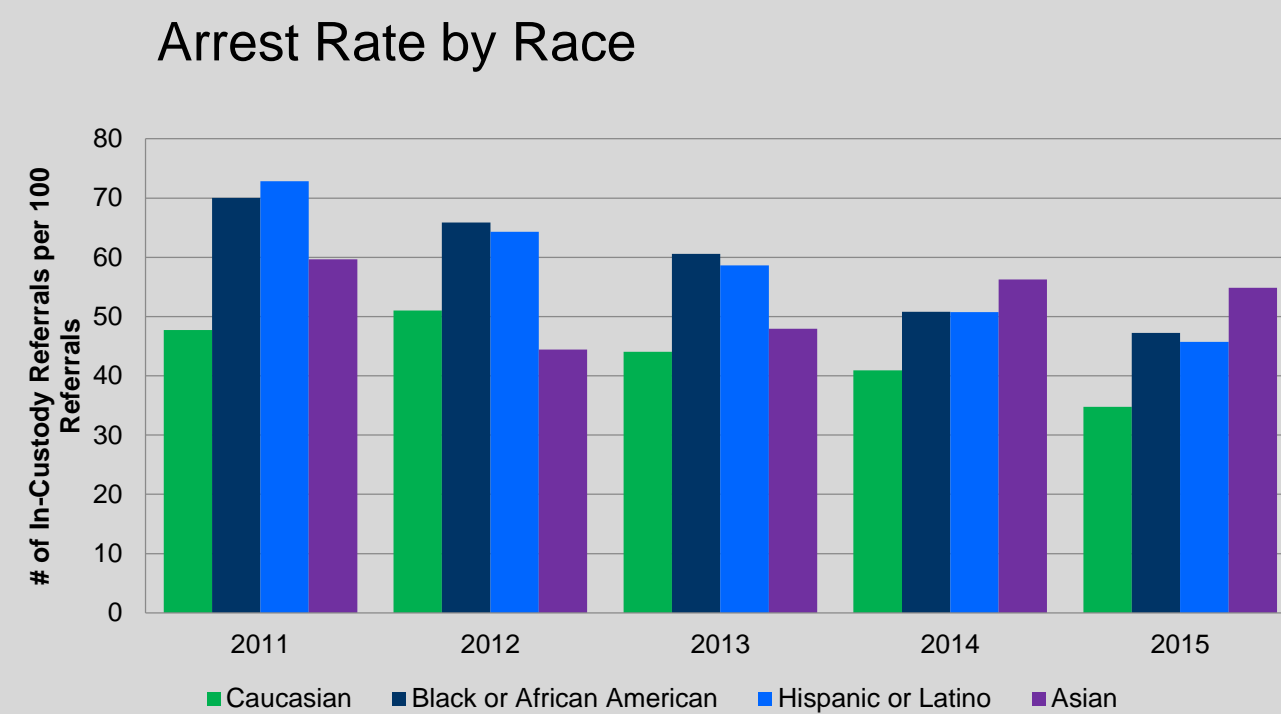
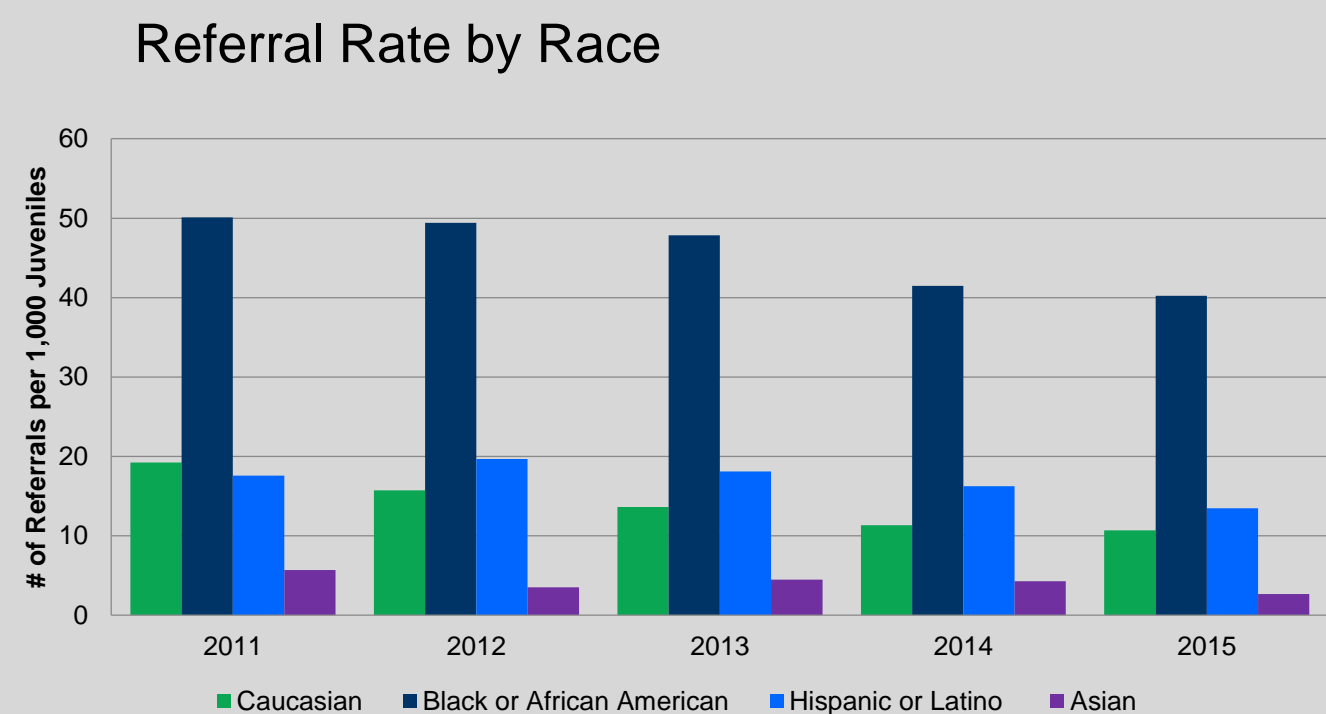
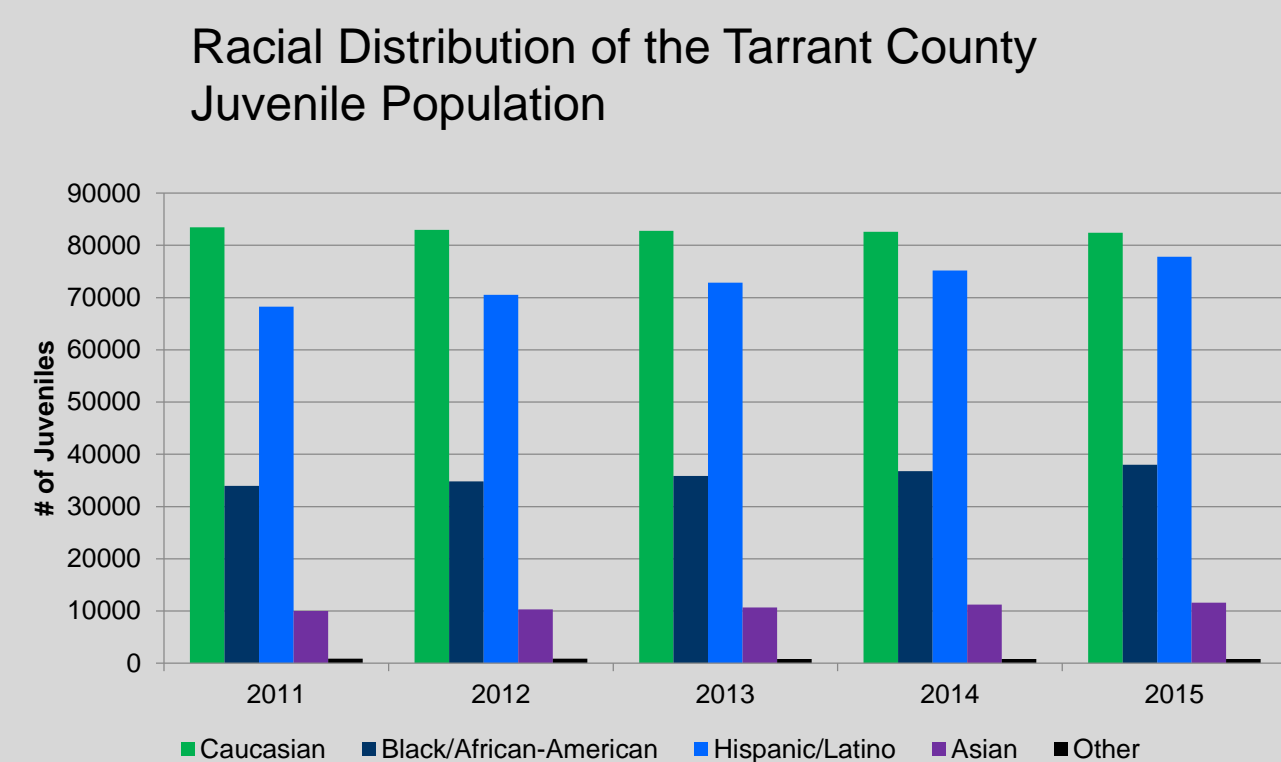
### Relative Rate Index (RRI)

The RRI value specifies if and to what degree disproportionate contact exists at each contact point.

$RRI = \frac{\text{The rate of minority youth at the juvenile justice system contact point}}{\text{The rate of white youth at the juvenile justice system contact point}}$

The rate used in the RRI calculation is based upon activity in the preceding stage.

## Rates by Race: 2011-2015



## Relative Rate Index

Relative Rate Index Values

Area of concern	Decision stages or contact points
More than 1.00	Arrests
	Referrals to juvenile court
	Cases involving secure detention
	Cases petitioned
	Cases resulting in delinquency/violated findings
Less than 1.00	Cases resulting in placement
	Cases resulting in commitment to TJJD
	Referrals to JJAEP
Less than 1.00	Cases diverted
	Cases disposed to DPP
	Cases resulting in probation

Relative Rate Index: 2015

Contact Point	African American	Hispanic	Asian	All Minorities
Referrals to Juvenile Court	3.76	1.26	0.25	1.90
Juvenile Arrests	1.36	1.31	1.58	1.34
Cases Diverted	0.78	0.86	1.54	0.82
Cases Resulting in DPP	0.83	1.10	**	0.95
Cases Involving Secure Detention	1.32	1.20	0.79	1.26
Cases Petitioned	1.22	1.26	0.61	1.23
Cases Resulting in Delinquent/Violated Findings	1.05	1.06	**	1.06
Cases Resulting in Probation/Modification	0.99	1.01	**	1.00
Cases Resulting in Placement	0.68	0.73	**	0.74
TJJD Commitments	1.56	1.51	**	1.52
Referrals to JJAEP	5.48	1.89	**	2.81

\*\*Insufficient number of cases for analysis

## Findings

This analysis has identified several contact points in the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System where DMC exists:

- African American and Hispanic youth were disproportionately referred to TCJS when compared to Caucasian youth.
- Hispanic and African American youth were consistently overrepresented in the number of in-custody referrals. In the most recent years under analysis, Asian youth were significantly more likely to receive an in-custody referral when compared to Caucasian youth.
- African American youth were consistently underrepresented in diversionary programs offered at TCJS. This finding applied to Hispanic youth as well in 2015.
- Youth from all races received DPP at similar rates.
- African American and Hispanic youth were detained at significantly higher rates than Caucasian youth.
- African American and Hispanic youth were petitioned at higher rates than Caucasian youth.
- Youth from all races were found delinquent or in violation at similar rates.
- There was not any disproportionate minority contact in regard to the number of youth receiving a modification to an existing term or new term of court-ordered probation.
- African American and Hispanic youth were placed at lower rates compared to Caucasian youth.
- In general, African American youth were overrepresented in the number of youth committed to TJJD.
- There was a consistent trend of minority overrepresentation in JJAEP referrals.

## Future Research

This analysis of the identification phase of the DMC research model has identified areas for assessment, intervention, and evaluation work.

Suggested contact points for further analysis include:

- Referrals for African American and Hispanic youth
- Arrests for Hispanic and African American youth; and
- Diversion programs for African American youth

This data is not intended to suggest or provide evidence of racial bias or explain, to any degree, the various factors that contribute to disproportionate contact. A number of complex decisions and events impact DMC. Through continued research, Tarrant County will contribute to the statewide and national movements toward reducing DMC in the juvenile justice system.